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ABSTRACT

This case study, part of the State Structures for the Governance of Higher Education study, focuses on governance and related issues in Illinois' higher education system. The study's overall purpose was to examine differences among states in their governance structures, and to determine if differences in performance were related to governing structures and whether structure affects strategies of state policymakers. The study is based on analysis of documents and on interviews conducted in 1995 with state officials, education administrators, faculty, and staff. The first section provides information on the state including its political culture and issues for higher education. Section 2 examines the characteristics of the Illinois higher education system, including its history, the role of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the community college system, research universities, comprehensive public 4-year institutions, private higher education, and assessment of the role played by structure. Section 3 considers the coordinating processes for Illinois higher education. These include the budget process; the program review process; a Priorities, Quality, and Productivity initiative; and system articulation. A final section provides a generally positive assessment of overall system performance. An appendix lists advisory board members. (Contains 10 references.) (DB)

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STATE STRUCTURES FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Georgia Case Study Summary

A Report from

THE CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY CENTER

Spring 1997

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State Structures for the Governance of Higher Education

Illinois Case Study Summary

By Richard C. Richardson, Jr.

Spring 1997

A Technical Paper Prepared for
State Structures for the Governance of Higher Education
and
The California Higher Education Policy Center

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Preface

State Structures for the Governance of Higher Education is a national research project concerning state governing structures for higher education. This project was conducted by The California Higher Education Policy Center with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts and The James Irvine Foundation. The purpose of the research is to better understand how states differ in the design of their governance structures, what difference in performance can be related to choice of governing structures, and how structure affects the strategies available to state policy makers with regard to the state's higher education system.

The products of the study include nine different publications: seven case studies, a comparative report, and an annotated bibliography. The *case studies* provide separate summaries of higher education governance for the seven states in this project: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Texas. The state systems of higher education examined in these studies include public and private postsecondary institutions as well as the arrangements for regulating, coordinating and funding them. Case study research was conducted between September 1994 and September 1996. For each state, researchers collected documents, examined archival data, and conducted interviews to obtain multiple sources of information about context, system design, governance structures, and performance. Over 200 interviews were conducted with state legislators, legislative staff, representatives from the governor's office, representatives from state budget and research agencies, state higher education agency officials, system and institutional presidents, chancellors and board members, and faculty. Documents reviewed include state budgets, master plans, statistical reports, board agendas, system histories, and newspaper accounts. All case study reports were reviewed for accuracy by knowledgeable individuals within the state.

Following the completion of the case study reports, a *comparative study* was developed to provide an interpretive synthesis of the data in the case studies. An *annotated bibliography* has been compiled to highlight relevant literature on governance in higher education, government, business, and K–12 education. The bibliography also includes several theoretical pieces that helped to frame the conceptual design of the research.

Throughout the project, the research team was guided by the advice of a National Advisory Committee comprised of 18 experts in higher education governance issues. We would like to thank each of the committee members for their assistance in this project (their names are listed in the Appendix to this case study). In addition, we wish to thank the following individuals for

their assistance in reviewing drafts of the case studies: Kenneth Ashworth, William Barba, Joseph Burke, Raymond Cardozier, Patrick Dallet, Cameron Fincher, Edward Hines, David Leslie, Marvin Peterson, William Pickens, Stephen Portch, Jack Smart, and Richard Wagner.

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This case study synthesizes interview data with other sources to paint a descriptive picture of governance and related issues facing Illinois' higher education system. It is based on documents gathered from public offices, higher education institutions and relevant publications. Interviews with state officials, education administrators, board members, faculty, and staff took place in March and May of 1995.

State Context

Illinois, with nearly 12 million residents, ranks fifth among the case study states and sixth in the United States in the size of its population. It is the 14th most diverse state (15 percent African-American, 8 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian) in the United States, with a relatively stable African-American population and rapidly growing populations of Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders.[1] Overall, Illinois anticipates static enrollments and static funding for higher education as the student population becomes more diverse and less prepared. Downsizing government and increasing productivity and efficiency are high priorities for the state.

Illinois residents are relatively affluent, young and well-educated. As summarized in Table 1, Illinois ranks at or near the top of the study states in terms of per capita income and the proportion of high school graduates in the population. It has a relatively low proportion of its population in poverty compared to other study states. The state is about average among study states in potential tax revenues and the level of education for the general population. It is also about average in its high school dropout rate and the percentage of families who report that English is not spoken in the home.

Table 1

Contextual Variables for Illinois Compared to Selected States

(Numbers in Parentheses Represent Rank Among the Seven Study States)

Contextual Variables	*High (1–2)*	*Average (3–5)*	*Low (6–7)*	*U.S. Average*
Population (in Millions) (1995)		11.8 (5)		
Per Capita Income (in Thousands) (1995)	24.8 (2)			22.8
Potential Tax Revenue (1995–96)*†		108 (3)		100
New High School Graduates per 1,000 Population (1995–96)†	10.1 (1)			9.6
Role of Private Higher Education§	Major			
Role of Governor‡	Strong			
% of Population with Associate Degree (1990)		5.8 (5)		6.2
% of Population with Baccalaureate (1990)		13.6 (3)		13.1
% of Population with Graduate or Professional Degree (1990)		7.5 (3)		7.2
% of Population 24 Years Old or Younger (1995)		35.8 (5)		35.5
% of Population that is Anglo (1990)		78.3 (3)		80.3
% of Population Who Do Not Speak English in Home (1990)		14.2 (5)		13.8
% of Population in Poverty (1994)			12.4 (7)	14.5
High School Dropout Rate (1992 to 1994 Average)		9.0 (5)		9.0

* This figure is expressed as an Index: National Average = 100.

Sources: Unless otherwise noted, data are drawn from *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* 43, no. 1 (September 1996), pp. 54, 55.

† From K. Halstead, *State Profiles for Higher Education 1978 to 1996: Trend Data* (Washington, D.C.: Research Associates of Washington, 1996), pp. 25, 28.

§ From Task Force on State Policy and Independent Higher Education, *The Preservation of Excellence in American Higher Education: The Essential Role of Private Colleges and Universities* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1990), p. 35.

‡ From J. M. Burns, J. W. Peltason, and T. E. Cronin, *State and Local Politics: Government by the People* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), p. 113.

Political Culture

The 1994 elections in Illinois produced significant changes in state administrative and legislative offices—Republican majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly, and Republicans in every major elected state office. The predecessor to the current Governor was in office for 16 years. During most of this period, the same individuals served respectively as president of the University of Illinois and executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the state coordinating board. Also during this time, a Democratic House of Representatives successfully resisted a number of initiatives aimed at modifying the higher education system.

Illinois has a constitutionally strong Governor who provides active leadership on key legislative measures. He also sends subtle messages to the higher education community through his other actions and his appointments. A senator told us that current Governor Jim Edgar, during his first years in office, did not increase the budget for higher education in some years and provided less than appropriated for K–12 in other years. According to this senator, this was the Governor's way of getting word to those in higher education that they should become more accountable. The Governor instituted higher education reforms by appointing a strong chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The chair delivered a message that both the Governor and Lieutenant Governor endorsed: "Emphasize quality, do what you do best, prioritize, and focus."

In some respects, the Lieutenant Governor is more visible to the higher education community than the Governor. He talks about decentralizing all forms of education and linking institutions more directly to accountability by getting rid of unnecessary layers. While the Lieutenant Governor meets periodically with a variety of education groups, he particularly likes to meet with faculty and may spend up to three hours in a meeting. His message to them, as reported by an assistant, is, "I'm not your biggest critic but the public out there is. I'm just telling you what they are saying." As well as improving the quality of undergraduate education and eliminating bureaucracy, he is also interested in investing more money in technology to provide a different kind of access in the future.

During the past decade, the Illinois Board of Higher Education has formally pursued a number of initiatives, including: opportunities for underrepresented groups, work-force preparation, productivity improvements, and undergraduate education.[2] Nonetheless, a former legislative aide suggested that IBHE priorities may not be widely understood among members of the Legislature. Part of the lack of understanding can be attributed to the realities of political life: most legislators approach higher education from the perspective of individual loyalties. A former legislative aide described every decision as "project related." Priorities for higher education are most commonly addressed in the appropriations process where conflicting interests compete. A legislator told us, "The Higher Education Committee really does not do very much."

Major lobbying groups for higher education with a strong presence in Springfield include each of the four university systems, the Student Aid Commission, the community colleges (including an influential community college trustees association), the major private institutions, and the Federation of Private Colleges and Universities. Faculty members have representation through their unions, but they are not as visible as institutional lobbyists. Relationships and alliances, which have generally been "quite harmonious," are very important to Illinois higher education. Lobbying representatives for institutions meet as a legislative liaison group to review bills. Because of this strong network, higher education representatives are often better informed than members of the Legislature. While some unusual things do occasionally show up in legislative budget hearings, this has not been a regular occurrence.

While the University of Illinois dominates public higher education, a small campus such as Chicago State with its black caucus can also influence legislators. With Republicans taking control in both houses, however, the suburbs have gained influence at the expense of Chicago. A reporter noted, "The anti-city feeling in the Legislature has always been strong and seems to be growing stronger." Combined with the anti-city sentiment is an interest in smaller government. Everyone assumes that the Legislature will continue to support private institutions "because they are so influential with key legislators." The University of Illinois enjoys a similar commitment from legislators because it is seen as "the premiere state university."

In Illinois, the key to fiscal success for higher education is getting the Governor to approve a favorable executive budget. Both higher education and K–12 submit their budgets directly to the Legislature; the Governor's wishes are conveyed to the Legislature through the Bureau of the Budget, which one official characterized as the "institutional no." The major concern of the bureau is the bottom line, although tuition costs and faculty salaries become important policy issues when they place pressures on total costs. The budget is a political document, but the job of the bureau is to provide essentially nonpartisan analysis.

During our site visits, political leaders were preoccupied by issues arising from the prospect of reduced federal dollars as well as changes in the ways that available federal dollars could be used. As in other states, higher education in Illinois is competing for fewer resources with health care, public assistance and public safety. A staff member observed, "The landscape is changing. It's hand-to-hand combat." A senior senator delivered a similar message: "This year's budget was very fragile. Higher education and K–12 are getting all of the money that they asked for and there is considerable resentment on the part of other state agencies."

Higher education under Republican leadership will be a "leaner, meaner system" that will push efficiency, said a former legislative staff member. Higher education appropriations increased by 14 percent from fiscal year 1990 to 1996, an amount just below the inflation rate (14.8 percent). Over the same period, higher education went from 13.3 percent of total general fund expenditures to 11.1 percent, a 16 percent decrease in share.[4] Key legislators believe that money pressures will remain a continuing problem.

Scarce resources fuel growing concerns about access, tuition increases and affordability. On a positive note, many political leaders believe the higher education community pitched in during tough times and has been helpful in confronting the issues.

Issues for Higher Education

Those we interviewed provided a number of agenda items that are important for Illinois higher education. Access and affordability are important, as are undergraduate teaching and learning. We found pervasive agreement on the importance of maintaining the individuality of institutions. Although there was clear agreement on the need to address faculty concerns, there was extensive disagreement about the appropriate responses to these issues.

An aide to the Lieutenant Governor told us that higher education has pulled away from its core areas, has hired too many administrators and has placed too much emphasis on research. He added, "The Lieutenant Governor also worries about tuition increases, how much time faculty spend teaching, and whether students are able to graduate in four years." A senator regarded as a friend of higher education emphasized problems of faculty productivity, adding, "Faculty and presidents want research but the Governor and the people generally want education." One of his counterparts from across the aisle expressed concern about the use of new dollars invested in the system. As an example, he cited the rapid growth in funds to support graduate assistants (about $23 million by his reckoning from 1993 to 1994) and tuition waivers for people who work at colleges and universities. Mirroring the concerns of these senators, an official from the Governor's Bureau of the Budget told us that teachers should do more teaching and less research. A reporter synthesized the most prominent public concerns as affordability and time-to-degree. A faculty member said that increasing salaries should be the top priority because these salaries are, by faculty calculation, 8 to 22 percent below national peer groups.

Many state leaders think Illinois has been doing a good job of providing access. Their concerns center on affordability and opportunities for place-bound older adults. An IBHE member favored expanded access for older people and more continuing education involving the use of technology. Elected leaders, who have already invested $30 million of new state money in a telecommunications effort, told us that increasing traditional access to four-year campuses may become less and less relevant to the state's needs. Several spoke of distance learning that would allow people to complete degrees in their own communities.

In marked contrast to these views, a public university president argued that access for underrepresented groups is the key state issue that will "jump up and bite the institutions and the state Legislature if they don't address it." Another president agreed, tying access issues to the objective of preparing students for the work force of the 21st century. But one of their colleagues compared student access to discussions of the weather: "Everyone talks about it, but no one does anything." A faculty leader acknowledged political commitment to access, but added that as an issue, "It comes second to downsizing, eliminating programs, and streamlining."

Questions about access are complicated by differing perspectives on priorities for funding. An influential senator, advocating for high tuition and high aid, described public higher education as a bargain for a lot of families. The senator described high tuition as an appropriate tax on the wealthy to help support those in need. A former legislative staff member argued, "The next big fight in this state will be over tuition and fees." A faculty union representative said, "Tuition has run rampant in Illinois and is out-of-hand. Institutions have become publicly assisted colleges and universities rather than public colleges and universities." This same representative argued that the agenda for the next five years should focus on restoring funding to historic levels, fully funding pension benefits, and controlling growth in the number of administrators.

A system official summarized the complex mix of differences and commonalties by observing, "The culture of institutions is so dominated by faculty values they have lost touch with changes that are taking place in the public policy environment." From his perspective, more communication should occur between public and academic leaders to help higher education find a way to become more responsive to public needs. Interestingly, he said that governing boards in Illinois do not prioritize their role as representatives of the public interest and that this needs to change. In contrast, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), through its Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) initiative, is consistently viewed within the political community as responsive to public concerns. (The PQP initiative, which has been controversial within the higher education community, has sought to close some campus programs and enhance others.)

Characteristics and History of the Higher Education System

The Illinois system of higher education includes 185 degree-granting institutions, 62 of which are publicly controlled. Higher education became a system in Illinois with the establishment of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) in 1961. The board's initial focus was on improving access. Its first master plan published in July 1964 led to establishing the Illinois community college system as well as providing the foundation for the state's overall structure for higher education, which has been called the "system of systems."

Until recently, the system of systems included four public university governing boards with responsibility for 12 public universities. The governing boards included the Board of Governors (responsible for five universities); the Board of Regents (responsible for three universities); the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University (two campuses); and the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois (two campuses). During our study, two of the university boards—the Board of Governors and the Board of Regents—were abolished and replaced with seven new boards that govern individual institutions.

In addition, the 49 community college campuses in Illinois are governed by 40 local boards of trustees who work with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) in carrying out their missions.

Illinois is one of seven states where private institutions are considered integral to the state higher education system.[4] Private institutions are involved extensively in planning. Illinois provides direct funding to private nonprofit colleges and universities, and special-purpose grants and contracts to private institutions in health services education and engineering. Because of the close integration of private institutions into the system of higher education, some private institutions have become involved in the reporting and accountability procedures IBHE has devised for the public institutions.

Table 2 reports selected characteristics of the Illinois system of higher education compared to other study states. Relative to other study states, Illinois is about average in the number of public two-year and private four-year institutions. While the number of public four-year universities is below average, the proportion of students they enroll is similar to other study states. Among study states, Illinois trails only California in the proportion of its population enrolled in two-year institutions. Significantly, the Illinois system appears relatively low-cost.

Illinois is below the national average in terms of resources (appropriations plus tuition) per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student.

Table 2

System Characteristics for Illinois Compared to Selected States

(Numbers in Parentheses Represent Rank among the Seven Study States)

System Characteristics	*High (1–2)*	*Average (3–5)*	*Low (6–7)*	*U.S. Average*
Total Degree-Granting Institutions (1994–95)		167 (4)		
Public Four-Year Institutions (1994–95)			12 (6)	
Public Two-Year Institutions (1994–95)		49 (4)		
% of Enrollment in Public Institutions (1994)			74.6 (6)	78.0
FTE per 1,000 Population (Public Institutions Only) (1995–96)*		29.9 (4)		31.5
Participation Ratio: Public FTE Students per New High School Graduate (1995–96)*			2.94 (6)	3.28
% of High School Graduates Going on to Higher Education Anywhere (1994)†	63.9 (2)			57.3
State Appropriations Plus Tuition per FTE Student (1995–96)*		$6,524 (5)		$7,020

Sources: Unless otherwise noted, data are drawn from *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* (September 1996), pp. 54–55.
* Halstead, *State Profiles: Trend Data* (1996), pp. 25, 28.
† Halstead, *Higher Education Report Card 1995* (Washington D.C.: Research Associates of Washington, 1996), p. 61.

Total enrollment in higher education (public and private) in Illinois in fiscal year 1996 was 721,575, an increase of just one percent since fiscal year 1990.[5] Enrollment growth is expected to be moderate over the next decade, with a projected 17 percent increase in the number of high school graduates.[6]

The Illinois system of systems was described by one IBHE member as strong and decentralized. He argued that it is a great system of public and private universities that is extremely strong in every field, with enough diversity among universities to serve the needs of a diverse state. He said that there is also a tremendous community college system. IBHE has provided effective coordination, he said, because the Governor generally accepts board recommendations, and because of the trusting relationships that have developed among members of the board, the staff of the board, and the more influential institutional leaders.

Some of the individuals we interviewed said that the clear distinction within the system between coordination and governance has helped to buffer institutions from undue political intrusion. A former legislative staff member praised the system for addressing problems with regard to affirmative action, removing presidents who were performing poorly, increasing access for minority students, and balancing the geographic and regional mix of institutions in the state. An aide to the Lieutenant Governor argued, however, that legislative passivity in higher education policy-making was less due to the performance of the structure than to the lack of public concern about higher education issues.

There were also criticisms of the system of systems. It was described by some as too interested in maintaining consensus and a united front. One respondent said that institutional interests sometimes take precedence over issues such as access and cost effectiveness. Another said that institutional representatives on IBHE contribute to ineffective decision-making because people sit "in judgment of their own proposals." The system was also faulted because system boards serve as buffers or filters that prevent the faculty message from getting to the Legislature.

A president told us that until recently there were few expectations for institutional outcome measures because institutions and their governing boards did not want to be held accountable for specific outcomes. A board member said, "It's not easy to change directions in higher education; it takes a long time."

System History

Historical legacies help explain present behaviors. In Illinois, public institutions were started in rural areas, while private institutions dominated the urban settings. The system of systems was put together as a structure of checks and balances to improve the capacity of smaller four-year institutions to compete with the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University. While the system of systems never achieved the balance of enrollment and resources that was originally intended, it was successful in creating a politically responsive environment (although one not necessarily focused on educational priorities).

The organization of the public sector and its subsequent growth raised concerns among private institutions. In the late 1960s, a commission headed by T. R. McConnell was asked to do an independent study of the role of private institutions. Armed with the results of the study, private institutions went to the Legislature and asked for need-based financial aid programs and capitation grants to subsidize Illinois students attending private institutions. They also asked that the state use capacity in the private sector instead of starting new programs in public institutions. In return the institutions agreed they should be involved in IBHE master planning. Despite occasional differences of opinion between public and private institutions, the adversarial relationships that are common in many states have never developed in Illinois.

The decisions made in the 1960s to use the capacity of private colleges and universities rather than building new four-year institutions—and to create a statewide system of community colleges to accommodate most of the increases in new students at the lower-division level—are important legacies that contribute to the shape of contemporary Illinois higher education. From the perspective of current leaders, both decisions have produced substantial benefits for the state.

In spring 1995, Senate Bill 614 abolished the Board of Regents and the Board of Governors, replacing them with individual boards for seven of the eight institutions that they governed. The eighth, Sangamon State University, was redesignated as the third campus of the University of Illinois. The bill also changed the composition of the Board of Higher Education to remove most of the institutional representatives. The new structure calls for one representative on the board from the public institutions and one from the privates.

In short order, after passage of Senate Bill 614, three additional bills were introduced. The first would have increased IBHE's power by giving it authority to set tuition, to eliminate programs, to supervise construction (including the use of non-public funds), and to perform an audit function for institutional foundations. The bill received little support from the Legislature partly because it was opposed by the University of Illinois on the grounds that it was unnecessary and would create a super-board. In addition, IBHE was divided internally, with system representatives generally in opposition. Those within the political structure see little justification for additional change. As one example, a representative from the Governor's Bureau of the Budget said there is really no need for anyone to take control over tuition increases since tuition funds are placed in a segregated fund (for each institution) and require a legislative appropriation for use.

A second bill was aimed at removing the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) from the jurisdiction of IBHE. This bill passed both legislative chambers by huge margins. Ultimately, it was vetoed by the Governor. A third bill was designed to restore seats on the Illinois Board of Higher Education for institutional representatives of the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University. This bill did not make it out of committee.

Many long-term observers of Illinois higher education were shocked by the swiftness with which a highly regarded system was changed by the passage of Senate Bill 614. A reporter said he was "shaking his head that a system that appeared to be working was now being completely shaken up." He added that the recent proposals for governance changes, particularly the move for increased power by IBHE, "took people by surprise." While people knew that changes might be proposed, he said, no one knew how quickly things were going to happen and no one really thought through some of the consequences.

The process that led to these changes began when representatives of institutions within the Regents' and Governors' systems (for the most part, former teachers' colleges that had broadened their missions and become state universities) grew restive and thought that their

system governing boards—along with IBHE—were limiting their hopes and aspirations too greatly. Community members felt that their institutions had not developed the comprehensive programs they needed. So they pushed for more autonomy. A legislator who described himself as the first to have visited every college campus in the state (speaking separately to faculty, students and administrators) told us his support for Senate Bill 614 was predicated in part on his private conversations with presidents who unanimously favored elimination of the systems.

During his first term in the Illinois Legislature, Governor Edgar chaired a study and introduced a bill to reorganize higher education. The bill did not pass. As a result of this experience, however, the Governor knew how the system worked and was convinced it needed to change. According to one respondent, both the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor thought the systems were overly complex and had doubts about how well they were working. The Lieutenant Governor in particular believed that the Regents' and Governors' boards were too distant from what happened on campus and that boards needed to be held more accountable. Institutional boards, from their perspective, would be more effective and would strengthen presidential leadership as well as faculty leadership.

There were less exalted motives ascribed as well. We were told, for example, that the Lieutenant Governor was a graduate of Sangamon State and wanted to increase the institution's status by designating it as a campus of the University of Illinois. The Governor, an alumnus of Eastern Illinois University, was described as "a close friend of a president who was fired by one of the discontinued systems' boards." Others see changes to the structure as a backlash against stronger IBHE leadership under a new chair who emphasized programs like PQP and made a lot of speeches about the need to "tighten up" in higher education.

In the final analysis, the most important reason for the change may well be that there was widespread support from the affected institutions and very little effective opposition. The chair of IBHE was the co-chair of the Governor's committee that advanced the restructuring proposal. The official position of IBHE during legislative consideration of the proposal was "to stay above the fray." The principal opposition came from people in systems not perceived as politically influential and unions who under the restructuring would have to negotiate with each institutional board rather than at the system level. The last time the proposal for a similar reorganization had been advanced, it was defeated by a single vote in a Democratically controlled House, largely due to union opposition.

Perspectives on the impact of the governance change vary by responsibilities. One interviewee suggested that it might make presidents of institutions with new boards more likely to "make a mistake and gather a lot of publicity that will be bad for higher education." A representative from the Bureau of the Budget suggested, "The governance change will probably create problems because expectations of the institutions are up but there are still no dollars to fund them." A former legislative staff member does not think that the governance change would shift resources, but said that it might set up institutions for potential legislative intrusion into

higher education policy-making. An assistant to the Lieutenant Governor (who co-chaired the study committee that made the recommendations for change) described the arrangements as, "probably what policy leaders see as an appropriate balance between state and institutional influences."

A former IBHE staff member predicted that the current change in structure would not last long because of the instability that will be created. A member of IBHE is concerned about the need for program elimination and the difficulties of addressing this issue under the new structure without increased IBHE powers. A second IBHE member is worried about the balance of accountability, responsibility and advocacy, as well as the capacity for incorporating a statewide perspective under the new structure. The executive director of IBHE said that creating institutional governing boards would require increased state oversight that could only be satisfied in one of three ways: "a super-board, increased powers for the IBHE, or increased interference on the part of the Governor and Legislature." Many of the institutions with new governing boards have already hired contract lobbyists. A reporter suggested that the restructuring, if nothing else, could be described as "a full-employment act for the lobbying community in the state capital."

Presidents and faculty members see the changes as altering the balance of influence among institutions, but they disagree about who would be favored. The president of one institution receiving a new board said that the success of the changes in governance would depend on presidents, boards and legislators, but he does not think that anyone will be worse off. A second president said he has seen an increase in lobbying and thinks that "things might get a little nasty in Springfield." He sees an opportunity for his institution if the Governor appoints a strong board. The majority position of presidents with new boards is summarized by one president who said, "There is a potential for 49 strong advocates for higher education with this new system. With the right people relating higher education to the state's economy, people will understand in greater detail how important public higher education is to the state." In contrast, a University of Illinois representative said bluntly, "The traditional Illinois system of systems is over. . . . There will be fewer incentives to reach difficult decisions in the future."

Offsetting the potential political influence of the new boards is legislative support for private colleges and universities. A legislative staff member identified the interest of legislators in giving state dollars to proprietary institutions as one example of the growing trend to rely on the private sector to achieve public purposes. In contrast, an influential state representative suggested that a major shift toward support for the privates may not be good public policy since many public institutions are significantly underfunded. A senior senator, however, gave considerable credit to the Board of Higher Education for increasing state aid as tuition increased. The senator, a trustee of a private college, believes that funding students that attend private colleges and universities saves the state a great deal of money and that the practice should continue.

Faculty members were frankly skeptical of the capacity of the new boards for achieving additional resources for their institutions. One said, "You have a Goliath in the University of Illinois and another strong university in Southern Illinois. What kind of roles will the others be able to play?" A second argued that the previous structure had created for the most part a level playing field among colleges and universities. Now he is concerned that the University of Illinois will get the lion's share of state resources and have the most political influence. Their perspectives are shared by a senior administrator from the University of Illinois (U of I), who suggested that the biggest problem of the new boards would be gaining political clout: "We ought to be smiling, but that is not our goal. We would rather have a workable higher education system than be more powerful ourselves."

Most of those we interviewed see the changes as the forerunner of additional reforms aimed at restoring the balance upset by the restructuring. One president argued that the changes made the system more volatile and less predictable and that these changes were threatening and ambiguous for many. He said that the system would be more difficult to manage in the future. While working relationships between the university and IBHE would continue, he said, it will be more difficult to work with seven separate institutions rather than the two system boards. Others think legislators will become disenchanted with the need to be directly involved with the system and will see the need for greater coordination.

A senior IBHE official said that it will be difficult for a campus-based board to deal with accountability issues, although he admitted that the system boards had not done an effective job with this issue either. An official from one of the two discontinued boards predicted that the Legislature would now rely more heavily on IBHE to preserve the necessary balance between institutional advocacy and the public interest, giving them *de facto* power even if their statutory powers were not increased. A senator made the same point when he suggested that each institution would seek increased support from the legislators in its district, with none of the institutions or their legislators concerned with serving higher education in Illinois as a whole.

To date, IBHE leadership has reacted to the changes in a number of ways. The abortive legislative attempt to increase IBHE powers has already been described. IBHE fought and appears to have survived the challenge by community colleges to be taken from their jurisdiction. In turn, the board has promised increased responsiveness to community college concerns. The executive director has convened presidents from the public, private and community colleges, whereas previously it was the system heads, not the presidents, who were brought together. While the executive director has no power to convene presidents by sector, we were told this is an effective way of bringing the community together and more of these kinds of meetings will be needed (especially with the public sector) if the new governance arrangements are to remain effective. And IBHE leadership has not given up the search for a buffer that will either strengthen IBHE or develop some new form of system to keep campuses at arm's length from the Legislature.

There are also more tensions between the public and private sectors than in the past. (One example is the relationship between private and public institutions in the rapidly growing western suburbs of Chicago. At the time of this study, no public institution served this area, but there had been several squabbles about whether the U of I should extend its reach there.) A representative from the Governor's office suggested that the ground is shifting under IBHE, with four-year colleges viewed as not very innovative and perhaps losing importance while community colleges are gaining in significance. Given all of these tensions, a legislative staff member said that the shake-out might do some good, adding, "Every institution needs a lot of action and drama to get one ounce of good."

Illinois Board of Higher Education

The executive director described the Illinois Board of Higher Education as "the neck of the bottle. We aren't just higher education. We aren't just government. We take positions that are not as predictable as segmental boards. We try to be advocates of higher education, but they don't always perceive us as such." He continued by comparing the board to a consulting firm with little statutory authority. Authority comes from the way the Governor and the Legislature have used the board. A former IBHE staff member made a similar observation when he said, "The Board of Higher Education's power is not in statutes but in gathering groups together, achieving consensus, and presenting with one voice."

The president of a comprehensive public university described IBHE as a "steward" and evaluated IBHE performance on three aspects of this role: "defining the important policy issues facing education (the board still has a ways to go on this one); causing universities to think seriously about what they are doing and why they are doing it (getting the system to act like a system . . .); [and being] at the same time both advocates and critics of higher education in the policy arena." A community college president described the board as "controlling," primarily focused on funding, capital matters, and policy development but with more power over universities than community colleges.

A university president suggested that the board derives its power from a strong Governor who always turns to IBHE to allocate resources. In his mind the board has enhanced its authority through focusing on rational, responsible budget recommendations and reducing conflicts among institutions and sectors. A representative of independent colleges described the board as the focal point of political power for Illinois higher education. The degree to which problems are thrashed out at the IBHE level allows the Governor and Legislature to be free from hands-on operations of the colleges and universities. The work of IBHE was said by others to be "first-rate and respected across the state."

The board's authority also derives from "quality board members" and a reputation for hiring people on merit that has prevented it from becoming a political dumping ground. The executive director was characterized as "a creature of the Board of Higher Education who works at nothing but its benefit," and "a seismograph, anticipating issues before they arise." He was

also described as "very slow to anger," "very unflappable." According to one observer, his ability to keep the focus on issues rather than personalities has "a calming effect on the staff."

As well as producing high-quality work, IBHE keeps a low profile. The IBHE offices are modest, to say the least, and cannot be seen from the street. Unlike other offices of state government, there are no signs on the exterior of the building. Offices and the main conference room are small, with standard, state-issue furniture. In addition to very ordinary offices, the board has maintained an office car known as "the Beast." This ancient Ford reached 125,000 miles before collapsing. The executive director took delight in driving this relic to IBHE meetings or meetings with campus presidents to contrast their living styles with that of IBHE.

Over the past 15 years, IBHE authority has grown, not so much through statute as through its success in promoting a united front among higher education leaders. Board stature has also been enhanced through acceptance of its recommendations by the Legislature and governors. A board staff member described this evolutionary development: "The Legislature probably doesn't want an IBHE that is too strong. The first time IBHE tried to exercise influence by recommending a higher level of admission requirements, they were reversed, partly because of resistance from the K–12 sector concerned about cost. Maitland [a senior state senator] put the board's requirements into statute with a delayed implementation date. The statute also added more flexibility in meeting the requirements than IBHE wanted. This led to sort of a rule of thumb—if you can get there by building consensus, IBHE will do it; if the issue produces conflict, the Legislature will probably provide resolution." A representative from the community college sector made the same point somewhat differently: "In Illinois there has been a great emphasis on harmony and unanimity among the higher education community. IBHE is the big daddy of this process."

A senior staff member for IBHE described the difference between consensus-building and negotiation. From his perspective, negotiation means "the compromise of opposing points of view," while consensus-building involves "finding areas of agreement about which ends are worth achieving and how to go about achieving them." Other respondents suggested that consensus-building involves discussions and papers and perhaps not a great deal of change. A staff member for the Lieutenant Governor said, "IBHE basically studied the issues it dealt with for a god-awful number of years." A representative from the private sector suggested that conventional governance structures "militate against raising issues that get people upset with you. The incentives for staff at IBHE are on the side of keeping things the way they are and following the *status quo*. This approach creates a comfort zone for the staff." We were told that ordinarily there is consensus among the segments before issues reach the board.

Within the consultative, consensus-building process some sectors are perceived as "more equal than others." A community college representative suggested that IBHE provides directives "to community colleges and universities of lesser status but [is] much more conciliatory with the U of I and private institutions." A university president told us the leadership styles of the president of the U of I and the executive director of IBHE are highly

compatible. The executive director of IBHE works hard to keep recommendations consistent with the agenda of the U of I, knowing that once "U of I was in the barn," other segments are manageable. While IBHE has not articulated its own vision for higher education, it has embraced a vision promoted by the president of the U of I that is broad enough and well enough informed to encompass the entire higher education community.

IBHE is sensitive to the political culture. The board chair at the time of our visit had high credibility with the Governor and was particularly effective at articulating the public policy agenda. The executive director is perceived as sensitive to issues and forward-looking. IBHE provides high-quality information and coordinates information services well. They provide quick responses with a small staff and have done a masterful job of getting legislators to use their services. While remaining visible and available, the board is cautious about taking positions on new legislation. In its informational role, IBHE provides a note on each bill that is introduced, including a synthesis and relative information. These notes go to House and Senate staff, to Appropriations Committee members, and to the higher education community.

A House staff member told us that the committee he staffs works "with IBHE in particular because IBHE is really the institutional memory of higher education." A senator noted the comprehensive data provided by the board, including assessments of Illinois higher education affordability, the progress of minority students in higher education, the implementation of work-force preparation policies, and analyses of the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) initiative in higher education institutions. A community college representative provided a somewhat back-handed compliment when he noted, "IBHE is so inundated with paper, it turns out more information than anyone else. They're good at collecting information and putting it together. However, it is their format and their interpretation." The president of a comprehensive university described IBHE as very good at keeping political representatives happy by targeting resources on favored institutions.

IBHE's basic mode of operation involves working through the administrative structure, particularly by seeking the participation of presidents. While the board receives input from four advisory committees, including ones representing faculty, students and independent institutions, the real action takes place in consultations between IBHE and institutional governing boards and presidents. An official in state government went so far as to state, "The president of the University of Illinois and the executive director of the Board of Higher Education make deals behind closed doors because the director is aware that the president can go around the Board of Higher Education." A senior U of I official described the process somewhat differently: "The board [executive director] informs the president of what the board is planning to do. This does not necessarily mean they will always agree but it is a courtesy that each affords to the other." It was clearly the absence of such consultation about the legislation to increase IBHE powers that provoked much of the reaction from the U of I.

Many of the strategic directions established by the board appear to arise from actions of the chair and the executive director. The board does not, for example, have standing committees on

areas such as legislation. Nor do lobbyists generally go to individual members of the board. Moreover, board members disagree as to the extent of their involvement in real policy discussions. During an IBHE meeting, for instance, one member said, "We as a board spend very little time talking about policy. We react only to papers that are generated by . . . staff who pile minutes upon minutes." Another board member contradicted him, noting, "We discuss a lot of policy here and in committee meetings." Later in the same meeting, board members clarified the primary roles of the chair and executive director concerning the legislative initiative to increase board powers. The absence of standing committees both allows and compels the chair and the executive director to develop and articulate board positions and priorities.

The board does appoint topical committees in such areas as technology, affordability, the PQP initiative, and undergraduate education. A representative of the private sector cited the work of the Committee on Affordability as an example of "balanced incrementalism." The committee, we were told, had a very difficult time getting the right issues on the table and did not go as far as they should have in raising issues regarding students' ability to pay. A second interviewee also criticized this committee, suggesting it had only a small number of people who tried to focus on what the public needed and came up with a set of soft recommendations that did not amount to much.

Institutional budgets and IBHE use of information have clearly been the incentives that have driven past IBHE decisions, although they were seldom perceived as tools for strategic planning or governance. That situation may be changing. Under the new chair, IBHE began to play a more visible, activist role. A university president told us while the chair was in office, IBHE was dominated by him, with other members simply falling into line. The president noted that the staff was directed as much by the chair as by the executive director.

The emerging strategy of IBHE has been to focus attention on the expenditure of base funding rather than on competition for whatever incremental increases may be available. Through this strategy, IBHE has attempted to emphasize the accountability of governing boards rather than focusing on incremental increases. Supporting IBHE's fiscal strategies is the experience of the executive director, who worked previously in the Bureau of the Budget and then was fiscal director for IBHE. The executive director has retained primary responsibility for the budget process.

The previous chair believes that the fundamental role of IBHE is to push change onto governing board agendas by identifying priorities of a statewide nature. He told us:

> *Priorities emerge from political factors, discussions with constituencies and a host of other sources. It is the entire mix of activities and discussions occurring within a state at a given time that contributes to such priorities. Within the directions suggested by these priorities it is the board's objective to get individual institutions to set their own priorities. If a board can be trusted in terms of its credibility, identifying priorities makes these issues bigger than life. If you have priorities, you have to make decisions*

> *in connection with them and this is why IBHE has emphasized the importance of getting institutions to develop priorities. Once institutions have developed priorities, these can be used to evaluate mission. Are priorities in line with mission? Bad programs must be thrown out. Among good programs, institutions must make decisions about which are most important. Requiring that institutions do this has been a basic board strategy in the PQP program.*

The board focus and activist approach generates concerns as well as endorsements. A university president—after acknowledging that it is reasonable for IBHE to raise questions about productivity and quality and to reward institutions that change—was apprehensive that the board might subsequently focus on such things as faculty workload, faculty roles, and faculty responsibilities. The possibility that the board might attempt to regulate these issues provoked the advice that IBHE should be careful about the battles it chooses to fight.

Community College System

The Illinois community college system has the third largest student body of any comparable system in the country. Depending upon whose estimates you accept, community colleges enroll from 50 to 65 percent of all college-credit students in Illinois. The colleges are very comprehensive and have high participation rates. They also have the advantage of being viewed as work-place training sites. We were told by a reporter that community colleges are more important in down-state communities. He described down-state as anything outside of Chicago. Most community colleges in Illinois are organized for collective bargaining and have the National Education Association (NEA) as their representative. Faculty members negotiate directly with the governing boards of their respective districts.

The community college districts are coordinated by Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), a state board that itself operates under the coordinating influence of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). ICCB was described by a member as "a coordinating board that acts as a governing board in certain respects." The board has statutory authority on tuition and can discontinue programs, the most important two powers that IBHE sought in the unsuccessful legislation to expand its powers.

ICCB sets standards (to ensure basic levels of quality) and prescribes overall vision, directions, and policy. Local governing boards determine how these directions should be applied within their institutions. The ICCB chair described the board as focused on local control but with authority to intervene if necessary. The ICCB executive director emphasized the board's role as "coordinating, not regulatory." ICCB exercises this role through massive leadership projects and an emphasis on quality and visibility with the Legislature. Although ICCB staff are responsible for interacting with the Legislature, they lack the capacity to quickly provide comparative information for community colleges and other sectors. As a result, most legislative requests for information go to IBHE.

At the time of this study, ICCB was working on a standardized accounting system to make it possible to compare costs across institutions. In anticipation of problems with one of the districts it coordinates, ICCB also introduced legislation to permit it to take over a college in deficit and to contract with a neighboring college to run programs and services. The governing board for the City Colleges of Chicago was told by ICCB that 105 academic programs for which the district lacked information on program location and number of enrolled students should be eliminated. The programs were discontinued. ICCB has also been active in building consensus about funding capital improvement and student aid programs.

According to some ICCB staff members, the ICCB chair emphasizes accountability to taxpayers, sometimes to the detriment of institutional advocacy. Mentioned particularly was the chair's support of uniform financial reporting procedures for community colleges, which was characterized as "the first really oppressive move by the Community College Board." In contrast, the IBHE chair perceived ICCB to be achieving the type of balance between accountability and advocacy that he would like to implement with his own board. ICCB was generally described as effective and helpful by IBHE members and staff. ICCB staff did not reciprocate in their descriptions of IBHE. One ICCB staff member described IBHE as, "stuck in the 70s; community colleges are treated with a benevolent and somewhat condescending affection."

The relationship between community colleges and IBHE was generally contentious during our study. An incident in which IBHE rearranged the priorities recommended by ICCB for capital projects served as a lightning rod for other frustrations. The president of a community college summarized these frustrations in a letter to the IBHE executive director when he charged that IBHE has: "no understanding . . . . no influence . . . and no vision."[7] An ICCB staff member told us that community colleges are treated as "junior members and poor cousins, so they have little to lose in coming out from under IBHE." Community college representatives in general charged IBHE with a lack of understanding of community colleges, a failure to give them appropriate priorities, and a failure to value their contributions in relation to those of four-year institutions.

Community college representatives have also been frustrated by an IBHE cost-study analysis that concluded their costs were higher than those in four-year institutions. We were told that IBHE staff would not agree to sit down with community college board staff to discuss the issue. These concerns contributed to the legislation aimed at removing community colleges from coordination by IBHE. A representative of private higher education said that even though the bill was vetoed by the Governor, its passage by the Legislature demonstrated more political clout than he had previously credited community colleges with having. He added that removing community colleges from IBHE jurisdiction might enhance opportunities for cooperation with the private sector.

This representative might have been less surprised by community college political strength if he had been present during some of the interviews we conducted. Among policy officials,

community colleges were widely described as outperforming four-year institutions. The Lieutenant Governor, described by an aide as "a numbers freak," has been impressed by the large number of students being served by community colleges as well as their efficiency in using resources. Even though he believes community colleges should spend more time on job training and economic development, his attitude toward these institutions was much more positive than his attitude toward universities.

The fact that community colleges are "on a roll politically" will not necessarily transfer into significant additional resources. A House staff member said that community colleges are very well regarded by the public in comparison with universities. He added, "They come in a poor second on a lot of things in the legislative process." A senior senator observed that money would be saved by putting more students in community colleges only if there were no spaces available in four-year institutions.

A representative of the state Board of Education (K–12) expressed a view of ICCB similar to the ICCB staff perceptions of IBHE. He told us that the Board of Education created a special task force to study technology. At their first meeting they discovered that ICCB had already completed a study and was in the process of implementing the results without consulting them. The issue of adult education has also been a source of conflict. The representative added, "Because community colleges think adult education is their responsibility, they assume the governance. The discussions about adult education and relationships with K–12 have been power ones."

Research Universities

The University of Illinois, which dominates the state's public higher education scene, does not think of itself as a system and others tend not to see it that way either. The university has a strong president with chancellors filling the roles of campus provosts. During our study, legislation was passed that transformed the University of Illinois' Board of Trustees from an elected governing board to a board appointed by the Governor. Almost concurrently, a highly respected president who was said by some to have been the key figure in higher education in Illinois decided to return to the faculty and was replaced by the chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago. As previously noted, the legislation that created new governing boards for seven institutions also designated Sangamon State in Springfield as the third campus of the University of Illinois.

A reporter described the change in the board structure as a significant issue. From his perspective, the elected board had been very political and rather weak. Until the mid-1980s the board was made up of representatives who were supported by the university alumni association. These typically were friends of the university and did what the university wanted. In the mid-1980s political parties began to put forth their own nominees for election.

The U of I board was clearly more effective as an advocate for the university than as an instrument for accountability. Most of those we interviewed see the change in method of selecting board members as positive, so long as the quality of gubernatorial appointments is maintained. Some suggested that a stronger governing board might constrain the president in "leaning on the Governor for more support for higher education."

There is little question about the importance of the resignation of the president of the U of I to higher education in Illinois. A senior U of I official said, "He called the shots." One example is his single-handed defeat of an early retirement proposal supported by all of the other presidents in Illinois.

A reporter told us that after several years of high tuition increases, the U of I board agreed to link increases to inflation to make tuition more predictable. This action established a pattern that was subsequently followed by most of the other institutions.

The incoming U of I president served as the chief executive officer of the Chicago campus for ten years and has a clear interest in urban issues. At an IBHE meeting after his selection had been announced, he described seven priorities for his administration: an improved academic climate, including undergraduate instruction, retention rates, and graduation rates; improved health-care operations; greater responsiveness to the community; improved processes rather than individual blame; improved communication; greater diversity; and strengthened external linkages. An aide to the Governor present at the board meeting later referred to these priorities in highly positive terms.

The incoming president was not sure about whether he would have the type of relationship with IBHE that his predecessor enjoyed. He hoped, however, that IBHE and the University of Illinois would continue to enjoy strong ties. A state representative noted that the new president, while a good administrator, is not the politician that his predecessor was. He said that the outgoing president chose his battles carefully and took a low-key role in relation to the statewide PQP initiative; but when it counted, he was there. Another legislator noted that the outgoing president could settle things and leave everyone happy. A former aide to a previous Governor spoke of his political prowess: "Anytime the Governor went to an Illinois game it was going to cost one or two million dollars. He might just as well have taken it [the money] with him" to the game.

The Chicago and Champaign-Urbana campuses have very similar missions but very different approaches. In Chicago the focus is on health care and urban issues. The focus at the Champaign-Urbana campus is in the sciences and engineering. Because the Chicago campus has seen a great deal of growth in size and reputation during the past decade, a former IBHE staff member thinks that eventually they will be split away from Champaign-Urbana with a separate board of their own. He said he suspects that one reason the new president was chosen was to cement the ties between the Chicago and Champaign-Urbana campuses.

Most observers suggested to us that system governance changes will not make much difference for the U of I, with the exception of some anguish on the part of faculty and administrators with regard to the addition of Sangamon State. Concerns are due primarily to a perception that the faculty at Sangamon are not at the same level of quality as the faculty at the two university campuses. There is also the concern that Sangamon will drain resources from the other two institutions. Additionally, a senior Democratic senator has been upset because the U of I would break the collective bargaining unit at Sangamon State. The incoming U of I president sees a potential problem in the mismatch between Sangamon State as an upper-division institution and two research universities. In contrast, a president of a comprehensive university thinks that broadening the scope of U of I board responsibilities might have a beneficial impact on quality issues, "if Sangamon State is not vacuumed in."

Southern Illinois University (SIU), the other major public research university in the state, may be more affected by the governance changes than the U of I. SIU's influence in Springfield was diluted through reapportionment, which caused their support in the state Senate to drop from 19 or 20 senators who came from south of Springfield to 7. Among the 19 or 20 were many powerful politicians who helped build Southern Illinois University to its current status.

Comprehensive Public Four-Year Institutions

The eight institutions belonging to the defunct Regents and Governors systems were, of course, most affected by the structural changes. A president of one of these institutions described the strengths of the systems that were dissolved as: providing a comfort zone by being a system; making it unnecessary for the institutions to deal with collective bargaining; and making it unnecessary for institutions to have their own legal representation. There are no plans to provide enough money to offset the services that systems will no longer provide, including contracting out for lobbyists and hiring a general counsel. This same president gave the system boards a C-minus on their work in the legislative arena.

One senator told us about the history of the two defunct boards. Each began with an executive director whose title was later changed to chancellor. This change angered political leaders, as did the chancellors' high salaries. Many respondents agreed with another state representative who described the former systems' boards as weak, with poor leaders and ineffective staffs.

Several presidents of comprehensive universities told us that institutions within a particular system tended to be treated by the defunct system boards as similar when they really are not. Perhaps the leading example involved the friction between Chicago State University and Northeastern as big-city, commuter institutions in contrast with residential institutions in smaller communities that were also part of their system. A reporter characterized the inclusion of dissimilar institutions in the same system as "not a good cultural fit." A president of an urban college pointed to the problems of an Illinois cost-study model when applied to developmental programs, academic support programs, and financial aid requirements of institutions serving high minority populations.

While institutional presidents were generally positive about receiving their own boards, their perspectives differed regarding the implications of this change. One looked forward to the additional time that would be freed because he would no longer have to attend so many meetings. A second was somewhat apprehensive about the need to spend a day and a half working with his own board, thus taking away from time spent with faculty and on campus. Both agreed that the governance change will cause presidents to spend more time on external issues, reducing the amount of time on campus. According to one president, they will need to confront the view within the policy community that "universities serve the full-time student with full-time faculty well, but this is a dwindling part of the market. Universities need to do more with technology and the emerging needs of the population."

Private Higher Education

Not-for-profit institutions in Illinois are represented by a federation of independent colleges and universities that supports a full-time staff member in Springfield. The privates are actively involved in IBHE deliberations because in the words of a representative, "IBHE can do things to help the privates. They also have the ability to do things to the privates, including [creating] excessive regulation." The state subsidizes private institutions fairly heavily. IBHE staff members believe that privates tend to reduce the amount of turbulence in the total system. Although the private sector can be politically influential, for the most part the private institutions do not exercise their potential influence.

Private colleges play a critical function in helping Illinois achieve state goals. Among the privates, those in the Chicago area are the most influential. IBHE most commonly works with the smaller, more vulnerable private universities. Although private institutions have been losing ground recently to the publics, the student aid program, which is focused on choice, access and retention, still provides the second largest state allocation in the nation ($256 million in fiscal year 1996). Privates also get more than $100 million in categorical grants annually. They provide approximately 40 percent of all bachelor degrees, 50 percent of the master's degrees, and 75 percent of the professional degrees awarded to first-time professional students in Illinois.

Independent colleges and universities have voluntarily participated in the PQP initiative, although outcomes are unclear. In addition, private colleges and universities have aggressively pursued the telecommunications agenda and received state money to support their efforts. They also participate in state issues through the Higher Education Cooperation Act, which provides funds that IBHE uses for discretionary multi-institutional grants focused on economic development, minority student achievement, teacher education, and the improvement of undergraduate education.

One IBHE member told us that the private sector provides a healthy contribution to the overall climate for dealing with governance issues, thus enhancing values and recognition of the public

sector. A second member, after describing the positive relationship between the state and its private colleges and universities, pointed to their use by the state in addressing underserved areas. A private college president confirmed this access role, and added that there is still unused capacity in private colleges and universities in specific programs. He argued that public universities should not be allowed to develop such programs as long as the privates can offer them.

The recent governance changes appear to have few implications for the private sector. A former legislative staff member suggested, however, that without the new authority sought by some members of IBHE, private colleges and universities might be used less effectively to achieve public purposes due to competition from the new public boards. Representatives from comprehensive four-year colleges and universities and the community college sector generally resent what they see as favored treatment for the privates. In contrast, the U of I is generally perceived to be supportive of private sector concerns.

Assessing the Role of Structure

In relation to the role of the governance structure, one president said, "Without strong leaders you cannot accomplish what you want to accomplish no matter what the structure is." The same president conceded later that structures do enable good people to have certain powers and responsibilities. He said, "Structures can impede or they can make it easier . . . but without strong, influential people you can just float—and will."

The chair of IBHE acknowledged the importance of leaders, but then told us:

> *In our society we work through institutions. Individuals make their contribution through some kind of structure, so structure is essential. A structure can facilitate the efforts of strong leaders. It can also help an institution in the ebb and flow of talent. That is, it facilitates continuity and helps institutions deal with a different mix. For example, at a given point in time, the institution may be strong in financial talent but weak in those who understand academics. A good structure will require those who are strong in financial issues learn enough about academic areas to make an effective contribution. . . . Structure fosters accountability, it encourages focus, and it provides the ability to deal with change. Over the past 10 to 15 years, Illinois has had a better balance between institutional autonomy and state coordination than the new recommendations will produce.*

A senior IBHE staff member told us two questions were particularly important in discussions of state governance structures: "How do you maintain the necessary balance of powers within the system . . . to be certain that the state perspective is maintained? What values are driving the system: that is, are the values of institutions determining or is there a process through which public concerns are surfaced and considered against institutional interests in ways that achieve an appropriate balance?" To consider these questions, we turn now to the processes through

which public policy interacts with coordinating and governance structures to shape institutional programs and services.

Coordinating Processes For Illinois Higher Education

The Illinois system of higher education is coordinated by IBHE through processes that have evolved from the board's statutory authority: to analyze needs and develop a master plan; to recommend budgetary needs for operations and for capital improvements to the Governor and General Assembly; to administer state and federal grant programs; to approve new and review existing programs of instruction, research or public service for the public sector in relation to educational and economic justification; and to approve or disapprove operating and degree-granting authority for nonpublic colleges and universities. We describe the major coordinating processes below from the perspectives of those within the system.

The Budget Process

The budget process begins at the institutional level. Governing boards and ICCB submit their requests to IBHE by November. There follows a series of "big picture meetings" in which IBHE staff and the presidents of the 12 public universities discuss the needs of each campus. During these meetings, general rules are established dealing with such issues as salary increases, utility costs, and tuition and fee increases. Institutions disregard these "rules" at their own peril. During the past year, for example, the SIU board tried to increase tuition by 13 percent instead of 3.5 percent as recommended by IBHE. After a variety of pressures brought through the Legislature, SIU changed its mind and went back to the 3.5 percent that everyone else was adopting.

IBHE next drafts a "shadow budget" as an indicator of what it might recommend to the Governor. Copies of the shadow budget are given to the presidents and to the Governor's Bureau of the Budget. This design encourages presidents to buy into IBHE's requests and concurrently seeks input from the bureau on what is possible. Even before developing the shadow budget, IBHE tries to get a sense from the Legislature and the Governor of the resources available for higher education. The strategy used in the past several years is to try to present a reasonable budget that has to be given serious consideration in the Legislature and the Governor's office. While this process of consultation was cynically described by one president as "asking for what they know they can get," IBHE staff believe they push the limit on what the state can provide. During the most recent year, IBHE cut $90 million from the requests of system boards while recommending a budget that was more than $92 million higher than the previous year in general funds support.

The presidents comment on the shadow budget and there is additional discussion. By January, discussions end; IBHE adopts a budget and sends it to the Governor and the Legislature. Typically, the Governor and majority and minority heads of each of the Illinois houses meet to negotiate and decide on the final budget. For the last two years, the Governor has agreed to the higher education budget advanced by IBHE.

By this time, a budget bill has already been introduced in the Legislature, and it is amended to conform to the recommendations of the Governor's Bureau of the Budget. At budget hearings, testimony on higher education is first taken from IBHE staff, then from the system chancellors or presidents. Institutional chief executive officers sit with system chancellors and presidents at the hearings.

IBHE conducts several analyses of cost data. Reported costs for an institution are compared with projected costs if the institution provided all instruction at the average state cost per student. Institutions whose costs exceed the per student average by more than five percent are encouraged to reduce costs. Those with reported costs below the state average by more than five percent may be encouraged to reduce enrollment. Cost studies allow IBHE to look at the results of the PQP process in institutions that have cut costs, cut programs, or are reallocating funds. The process for university cost studies as well as the format tables and charts have been in use for over 15 years so there is a considerable degree of constancy, stability, and longevity in the financial data.

The budget process does not always seem as rational and well-organized to institutional participants as it does to IBHE staff members who described it for us. The president of a comprehensive university talked about the process as "bizarre." He said, "Institutions are forced to begin planning now for what they will need in the next fiscal year; they work through their own campuses and through their governing boards and then give something to IBHE. At this point, categories of incentive funding miraculously appear, but institutions have not previously been told there is extra money in the budget if they do an especially good job on x or y." The president believes that if the process were used correctly it might really drive the way an institution established and met policy objectives.

This same president praised the board for providing PQP bonuses in the budgets of those institutions that had, according to IBHE representatives, effectively addressed this initiative. He said this was a powerful way of making a statement about what was important and should be taken seriously. A community college president was not so sure that the PQP process furnished usable data about what was happening on his campus.

A private sector representative suggested that the current cost data collected by IBHE is "suspect." The methodology excludes significant costs, he said, such as retirement, fringe benefits, and capital costs. He thinks that the cost data for each institution could be 50 percent higher than that reported. Another private sector representative criticized the IBHE and legislative focus as revenue-driven rather than expenditure-driven. From his perspective as well

as the perspectives of community college representatives, the net effect of many board procedures favors four-year institutions at the expense of community colleges, where funds may be in greater need.

A representative of the Bureau of the Budget told us that enrollment expectations or projections are not used at the state level. The chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee said there does not appear to be any formula or procedure for relating enrollment to budgets, then added, "After the fact, IBHE looks at costs-per-student and then tries to adjust requests." An IBHE staff member suggested that while budgets in Illinois are not enrollment-driven, a sizable jump in enrollment at an institution might be considered a justification for an increase.

Chicago State University is a case in point. During the several years prior to our visit, the institution increased its enrollment by 68 percent while receiving only a 19 percent increase in funding. In the fiscal year 1995 budget cycle, the institution requested a 29 percent increase which was whittled down to an 11 percent increase by the Board of Governors and finally to 4.5 percent by IBHE. An IBHE staff member justified the small increase by noting that Chicago State had taken a dive in enrollments in the late 80s while their funding remained relatively stable. The validity of this explanation notwithstanding, Chicago State was able to obtain $1.7 million beyond the amount recommended by IBHE in one of the few exceptions that occurred in that year's budget process. We were told this happened because Democratic members of the Legislature wanted to challenge the Governor's claim that he had "an education budget." Through a series of compromises, each of the legislative caucuses received funds they could provide to higher education. The Senate minority leader, who is from Chicago, was instrumental in arranging the additional funds for Chicago State.

In the final analysis, we were told that the entire system functions not because it's in the statutes, but because it's not. The board has no statutory right to mandate budgets. It can review them, but it does not have final authority over them. The system works because institutional representatives have thought that it is in their general interest to go along, to cooperate, to present a united front, and not to try to submit individual budgets to the Legislature. There have been times when individual institutions, usually the U of I, have threatened to submit their own budget because they were displeased by some of the decisions of IBHE, but in the end they have gone along.

Program Review

IBHE has been successful in exercising a reasonable degree of control over the proliferation of new programs. A board staff member told us that the approval process had been aided by focus statements, a concept he attributed to the IBHE chair at the time. The board previously asked campuses to create mission statements, but according to this staff member, "The attempt of the campus to write a mission statement turns out to be sort of a hundred-year project. They weren't getting anywhere." So IBHE decided to do its own focus statements. These have more

sharply defined the role of each campus and in so doing have confined some of the more ambitious aspirations.

We were told that the most important steps of the program-approval process happen on campus. When an application is received by IBHE, it is compared with criteria that have been developed for each sector. The review process operates at both the formal level (through advisory committees and other communications) and the informal level (through constant consultation and collaboration). The process moves very slowly, a source of comfort to people within and outside IBHE. The process is more formal and better documented for private than for public institutions. For community colleges, program approval takes place primarily at ICCB, with review by IBHE mostly a formality, unless the program is contested by another institution.

Program challenges most commonly involve duplication. Formal criteria address this issue in public institutions (including community colleges), but duplication is not a criterion for the approval of programs for private institutions.[8] The statute authorizing board authority for the private sector was essentially a consumer protection bill, as evidenced by its title in the 1960s as the "diploma mill bill." On the issue of whether IBHE should approve private sector programs that reduce the productivity of public institutions, an IBHE member suggested the board could not stop private institutions from spending their money. The differences in IBHE statutory authority for public and private institutions probably accounts for some of the opinions among individuals we interviewed that privates are favored in IBHE processes.

Chicago State administrators, who believe the institution would benefit substantially by having a master's degree in social work and an MBA program, were critical of the IBHE process for approving new programs. In the judgment of a senior administrator, this is because "The process does not allow for the needs of a particular area such as Chicago." To serve the needs of the population in a segregated city, the administrator continued, "We need to have such programs even if they already exist elsewhere."

The Priorities, Quality and Productivity (PQP) Initiative

The impetus for the Priorities, Quality and Productivity (PQP) initiative has been to increase efficiency—to get the best use of dollars for higher education. In response to 1989 gubernatorial concerns and "mixed public perceptions" about higher education accountability and productivity, IBHE established the Committee on Scope, Structure, and Productivity. In 1991 the new board chair called for institutions to set priorities and to improve quality and productivity. As the initiative evolved, each college and university was expected to focus its mission, to set priorities among programs and services consistent with that mission, and to consolidate or eliminate lower-priority and lower-quality programs and services to provide the resources for reinvestment to strengthen the quality of higher-priority programs and services.[9]

At the October 1992 board meeting, IBHE staff recommended the elimination, consolidation, or reduction of 190 programs at public universities, including seven percent of all undergraduate programs. In addition to reductions in instructional programs, staff recommendations called for phasing out state support for intercollegiate athletics, redirecting six to nine percent of the expenditures for research and public service to undergraduate education, and paying particular attention to faculty workload assignments for undergraduate education.

In 1993, the initial 190 programs were increased by another 33 identified by IBHE staff as economically and educationally unjustified. Out of this total of more than 220 programs, a staff member told us that about half were either eliminated or reconstituted in a more cost-efficient format. There are different estimates of the savings produced by the process. One IBHE staff member estimated cost savings for the two-year period from 1991 to 1993 at around $90 million, although he conceded this was a difficult number to calculate because of the flexibility campuses have in moving funds around once they receive them from the state. A former staff member suggested that even if all of the programs on the so-called hit list in the first and second years had been eliminated, the savings still would have been "nickel and dime stuff." Supporting this latter perspective were the comments of a faculty union representative who told us that most of the faculty in the 125 programs actually eliminated were absorbed into new programs or moved to other existing programs. He called the savings "fictitious," arguing that they came as the result of attrition of faculty members and either not replacing full-time faculty at all, or replacing full-time faculty with non-tenured faculty. He also said that some of the resources freed were used to increase faculty salaries.

A university president told us the common view that institutions have been able to keep all of the funds saved through PQP is not quite correct. The PQP process was preceded by a state rescission that took from institutions one-fourth to one-half of the funds they were likely to be able to free. Nonetheless, the president said that the results have been positive and that the real reinvestment would provide for a stronger system in the future. Even the former board staff member who described the savings as "nickel and dime stuff" said that about half of the effort has involved real reform—so that programs now make more sense than they did before.

In fiscal year 1995, IBHE gave bonuses ranging from $200,000 to $500,000 to 7 of the 12 public universities they judged particularly meritorious in implementing the PQP process. The five institutions that did not get bonuses complained to their local legislators and the heat grew sufficiently intense that IBHE staff plan to drop this approach. For fiscal year 1996 they will try to reward institutions doing the best job by giving them a larger share of the new program money in the hope that this approach will not stir up so much trouble in the Legislature. Also to dispel concerns raised by the 1995 approach, additional money will be provided to all institutions under a new "undergraduate education" bonus category.

Board caution is probably justified. At one of the early budget hearings for the current fiscal year, a legislative representative for IBHE was asked by the chair of the House Appropriations Committee, "Are there any blatant things in this budget like the PQP bonuses?"

IBHE is moving toward indicators for academic productivity as the next stage of PQP. In a public meeting, the chair described his "ten percent rule." No matter what an institution does, at least ten percent of the programs they have at any given time are probably of low quality and in need of review. PQP should be seen as a continuous quality-improvement initiative. According to this perspective, the easy program decisions were made in the first stage and now institutions face the more difficult decisions. "We are not about saving dollars," he said. "We are trying to use dollars to transform what we do. In the next phase PQP must consider the role of the faculty and how they spend their time."

The early stages of the PQP process received high praise from virtually every political leader we contacted, with the exception of some Democratic legislators. We were told by an assistant to the Lieutenant Governor that the process took an onerous burden off legislators in determining which programs ought to be closed so that resources in the current environment of constraints could extend as far as possible. A budget office representative said PQP has given the impression of accountability and that it has helped keep budgetary requests within the five percent range that more or less is reasonable in state budgeting. We were also told that PQP is appreciated by the Legislature because it departs somewhat from the consensual processes the board had followed in the past.

A senior senator described PQP as the first step toward accountability for IBHE. At the same time, he criticized the board for the timing of their 1992 report, noting that it was released after the board had asked universities to evaluate their programs but before universities had provided the results of this evaluation. The senator added, "The universities were livid at this action of the board." Democratic legislators were also critical. A senator who is particularly concerned about problems at Illinois State University and believes that the PQP process contributed to them, said the process was not communicated well and the overall goals were not clear.[10] A Democratic House staff member, while acknowledging the IBHE attempt to set priorities, told us that during the worst budget years, "PQP raised howls from the campuses and from legislators because IBHE had recommended cuts to some of the sacred cows like the Northern Illinois Law School and the Illinois State Agricultural Program." He continued, "These programs were not eliminated because the IBHE does not have the power to do so." At the time of our visit, however, the Legislature was no longer Democratic and was much more supportive of PQP than its predecessors.

Institutional representatives, while generally positive about the impact of PQP on efficiency, were more qualified in their praise than political leaders. Some suggested that the impact of the initiative varied widely by institutional type. A senior administrator for the U of I said that other institutions had "stone-walled the IBHE." A faculty union representative argued that the U of I probably did not pay any attention to it. We were also told that the Board of Governors

praised it publicly but probably did not do much about it and that the Board of Regents (particularly Illinois State) defied IBHE. One respondent suggested that many program reductions involved little more than getting rid of "catalogue clutter, stuff that's been around for a long time and people knew shouldn't be offered but was still there for one reason or another." A prominent example given was an inactive Ph.D. program in mining at the University of Illinois Urbana campus that was ultimately abandoned after an unsuccessful effort to keep it in the catalog.

A faculty member suggested that the IBHE executive director and chair were in fact "scapegoats to take the heat off institutional leaders who did not want to confront their faculty." Supporting this perception were the comments of a senior U of I administrator who suggested that PQP provided his campus administration with the camouflage they needed to do the things that needed being done anyway. He added, "The administration almost leapt for joy at the board's PQP initiative." A faculty labor representative described the focus of the board on academic programs as "mistaken," arguing that the board should have focused its efforts on administrative expenses and costs. An official of one of the discontinued system boards said that building political support has been an important outcome of the PQP exercise.

Finally, the process clearly worked better in some areas than in others. Intercollegiate athletics did not go through the same type of discussion that characterized the other programs identified by IBHE. Ultimately, IBHE abandoned its effort to redirect state-appropriated funds from intercollegiate athletics to academic programs.

Whatever the magnitude of savings, it seems clear that IBHE has improved its reputation for effectiveness. A K–12 representative described the PQP process as the closest thing to reform in higher education he has seen, adding, "PQP has given IBHE more muscle and made them more vigorous in their view of the state-level leadership they might provide." A member of IBHE said, "Board reputation has been enhanced because the board has been able to reallocate funds to institutions from the PQP process." A reporter told us PQP had a positive effect on institutions.

System Articulation

Encouraging institutions to work together across segmental boundaries is one of the functions a coordinating board might be expected to address and it is one of the action items on the IBHE agenda. There are, however, widely divergent perspectives on the effectiveness with which IBHE encourages the diverse institutions that comprise Illinois higher education to think of themselves as an integrated system.

We were told by a senior IBHE administrator that articulation and transfer between two- and four-year institutions has been on the agenda for almost 100 years because Joliet was founded in 1910 and current initiatives will be fully implemented in 2010. From his perspective, IBHE and ICCB made the decision that transfer and articulation would be addressed cooperatively as

a statewide initiative to develop a systematic process for improvement. As with other items on the consensus agenda, IBHE started with system academic officers and involved faculty in leadership positions on the campuses. To date the initiative has produced a new general education core acceptable at all public institutions and ten area panels that jointly encompass 75 percent of the students who transfer. Panels include high school faculty members as well as faculty representing universities and colleges. Plans are to have a fully articulated program in nursing by fall 1996. An IBHE staff member told us that Illinois has made more progress in articulation and transfer than most other states.

In contrast, an ICCB member told us that IBHE has studied articulation for 26 years. When the topic once again came before IBHE recently, staff suggested that it should be studied some more. The ICCB member who sits on IBHE rejected the recommendation and used information about the 3,000 annual reverse transfers to show a senior U of I administrator what would happen if community colleges decided to reject their credits. A comprehensive university president described the new general education core as, "a way of backing the U of I into a corner so they can be less snooty about taking general education courses from transfer students." The same president described the board's approach as "non-substantive but tactically effective." ICCB staff used the information system to show that in the final analysis very few students transfer to the U of I.

A staff member from ICCB was even more blunt in his assessment of IBHE leadership. While acknowledging the transfer and articulation effort as "useful," he said it was about four or five years behind most progressive states. He added, "The place where articulation is worse is with the U of I and that is where IBHE should have and could have done the most, but hasn't. IBHE has stepped in and grabbed the agenda and taken credit for progress that has essentially been accomplished through individual community colleges and the ICCB." Characterizing IBHE transfer and articulation efforts as "not cutting-edge," he said that there is "a lot more rhetoric than actual change."

The reality of Illinois articulation probably lies somewhere between these contrasting viewpoints—as suggested by the closing comments of an IBHE staff member. He told us, "Articulation . . . must constantly be on the agenda. Once you have a general education core, institutions change their approach to general education, so the process must constantly be attended." His description of enforcement procedures for the transfer initiatives and core curriculum reflected the weak statutory authority of IBHE as well as its consensus mode of operation. Colleges will submit their requirements to IBHE and the outcome will be an Internet list maintained by an office not yet identified.

The IBHE role with respect to relationships between the private and public sectors seems much more straightforward. A university president said IBHE's role is to "compromise the public institutions so they would not trample on the privates." He sees this as a great source of strength for IBHE in the political context of Illinois. From a different perspective, the chair of IBHE told us that the board has a role in preserving good relationships between the public and

private sector. He continued, "Every once in a while a head of steam builds up to take money away from the private sector because public higher education has so many problems." As a chair, he tried "to nip such efforts in the bud."

The "not-so-veiled resentment" that characterized the reactions of many community college representatives to IBHE was mirrored in the comments we heard from K–12 respondents. For instance, we were told that IBHE ignored the K–12 board in its discussion of admission requirements during the 1980s, despite the fact that K–12 was involved concurrently in looking at outcomes. We were also told, "There needs to be some way of linking higher education and basic education efforts. With respect to minority student achievement, higher education takes the moral high ground, but efforts at the institutional level in absence of pressures from the state have been pretty meaningless. Nothing much happens." IBHE's efforts to assess affordability were described as another "strain on the conversation" because the board never considers the impact on elementary and secondary school costs. Rather, it sends a message to K–12 education, "If you would do a better job of preparing students, our costs would go down." One respondent concluded, "No matter what happens, seems like the ball rolls downhill."

Concurrently, we were told by IBHE representatives that the relationship between higher education and K–12 was becoming more important. The arrival of a new superintendent and the activities of a joint Board of Education and IBHE Education Committee were identified as "promising developments." From our K–12 respondent's perspective, however, the Education Committee is "a wonderful idea without authority, a very ineffective group" where meetings exemplify the gulf: "They sit on one side, we sit on the other." Most of the effective cooperation between schools and universities, we were told, has occurred at the local level.

Assessing System Performance

The Illinois system represents a unique blend of strengths and weaknesses that has developed over time in response to the state context and political culture, the resources devoted to higher education in comparison with other priorities, and the structure and processes through which those resources have been applied.

Our interview data suggest incumbent Republican political leaders have high levels of satisfaction with the system in terms of efficiency and choice. Most also believe the system is providing as much access to traditional students as desirable. Democratic political leaders are somewhat more likely to fault the system on access. Political leaders from both parties are concerned about the quality of undergraduate education and the amount of emphasis four-year institutions place on research and graduate education. Part of the reason that community colleges are more favorably viewed than universities involves their single-minded concentration on teaching undergraduates. At the same time, everyone seems proud of the overall quality of the system, particularly as evidenced by the elite private universities and the University of Illinois.

According to system participants, the Illinois system of higher education gets high marks for efficiency improvements, largely because of the PQP initiative. Perhaps the most compelling indicator of satisfaction with this aspect of performance is full funding of IBHE's budget requests for the past two years. The Governor is said to have changed his attitude toward higher education based on PQP. Among other political leaders, the perceptions are increasingly that the system has been responsive to gubernatorial and legislative concerns. A comprehensive university president told us PQP has had an impact and that institutions are now forced to do more with less. A faculty member noted the 108 programs eliminated from public colleges and universities and suggested that the PQP initiative is stimulating the same kind of productivity and accountability improvements in the community college sector and among private colleges and universities. IBHE publishes data on administrative expenses and is given credit for trying to create a level playing field among universities on these costs.

According to institutional representatives, the greatest discrepancy between actual and desired performance is in the area of access, particularly for underserved citizens. IBHE's efforts in this arena were commonly and consistently criticized as "less than adequate," especially by the presidents of urban, comprehensive universities. We were told by one president that serving lower-income people was not the priority of many people in public institutions, and that while

"the body politic is satisfied with the level of access, Illinois colleges and universities are doing a lousy job with regard to minority access and achievement." A community college president pointed out the state's "dismal performance on minority access" and argued there was little attention to work-force needs.

While access remains a public priority for IBHE, a former legislative aide told us that access was difficult to think about from a state perspective because policy-makers in power, including the Governor and Legislature, are satisfied with the system's performance, despite the fact that recent figures show that the access and retention of underrepresented groups leaves much to be desired. The attitudes of public officials appear to be shared by the general public, at least to the extent that this view can be inferred from our interviews with representatives of public media.

Evidence on the achievement of quality initiatives is mixed. Illinois is widely regarded as a positive model for using private institutions to foster choice, quality, and efficiency—despite the concerns of comprehensive universities and community colleges about competition for scarce resources. While IBHE is given credit for stimulating the statewide discussion about priorities and for sharpening mission statements, there is the sense that rhetoric often outpaces achievements even for successful initiatives such as PQP.

An IBHE member complained about administrative roadblocks to timely completion of degrees, adding, "There is a need to minimize loss of student time and credit in higher education. Not enough effort has been made to see that students take programs in sequence. As a result, degree programs take too long. There is a need to crack down on this and get tough." At an IBHE public meeting, a staff member talked about the disappointing results of institutional work on assessment of baccalaureate-level skills. Colleges and universities were scheduled to report on objectives and progress toward measuring the extent to which skills were being attained. "After eight years," said the staff member, "little progress has been made." A comprehensive university president who followed the staff member to the podium talked about the difficulties of assessing baccalaureate-level skills. The IBHE chair labeled his response as an "unwillingness to be measured."

System participants associate both strengths and weaknesses with IBHE processes. For a long time, IBHE and the institutions it coordinates have had a good working relationship. The consensus-building process, however glacial, has reduced the need for legislative intervention. At the same time that many respondents described articulation efforts as "too little and too late," IBHE is well regarded for excellent staff work and high-quality analysis. Yet one knowledgeable observer, while agreeing that IBHE was the source of much information, described the overall effort as a "floating collection of abstract information" that has not been linked to policy. And while IBHE receives good marks for listening to faculty through the advisory committee structure, there is also the sense that the board is not able to take leadership in the discussion of faculty roles and responsibilities because it represents too many different kinds of institutions with too many different types of faculty.

On balance, higher education in Illinois seems to be fulfilling the expectations of its constituents. Certainly, Illinois policy makers are pleased with their institutions and the arrangements they have developed for governing and coordinating them. A K–12 respondent marveled at how immune higher education has been to calls for reform. An aide to a policy official said, "School reform stopped at the college steps because of public satisfaction with higher education." On the horizon, however, are actors like the Lieutenant Governor who are skeptical of some higher education practices. Many of our respondents conclude that political and legislative involvement in higher education will increase in the future.

Appendix

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Donald Phelps, W. K. Kellogg Regents Professor, Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas, Austin

Piedad Robertson, Superintendent and President, Santa Monica Community College

Guillermo Rodriguez, Executive Director, Latino Issues Forum

Notes

[1] *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* 43, no. 1 (September 1996), pp. 54–55; and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and The College Board, *The Road to College: Educational Progress by Race and Ethnicity* (Boulder: July 1991).

[2] R. C. Richardson, Jr., "Illinois," *Charting Higher Education Accountability*, edited by S. S. Ruppert (Denver: Education Commission of the States, June 1994).

[3] Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), "Illinois Higher Education Summary Information: Enrollments, Tuition, Student Aid and State Support," Springfield, 1996, not paginated.

[4] Task Force on State Policy and Independent Higher Education, *The Preservation of Excellence in American Higher Education: The Essential Role of Private Colleges and Universities* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1990), p. 35.

[5] IBHE, "Illinois Higher Education Summary Information."

[6] *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* (September 1996), p. 55.

[7] Letter from Charles R. Novak, president, Richland Community College, to Dr. Richard D. Wagner, dated June 13, 1995. Copies of this letter were sent to the Governor, the chair and executive director of ICCB, the senator who introduced the bill, two representatives, and members of the Community College Presidents Council.

[8] The minutes of the IBHE meeting of September 6, 1995, report concerns about unnecessary duplication raised by a board member about a request by the Teacher's Union to establish a private graduate school for teachers in Chicago. The board member was informed that this was not a criterion for the approval of programs offered by private schools. Ultimately, IBHE approved the request unanimously.

[9] IBHE, "Public University Program Review: Statewide Analyses," Board Agenda Item 5A, Springfield, July 1995, p. 1.

[10] During our study, the president of Illinois State University received a "no confidence" vote from the faculty and subsequently resigned.

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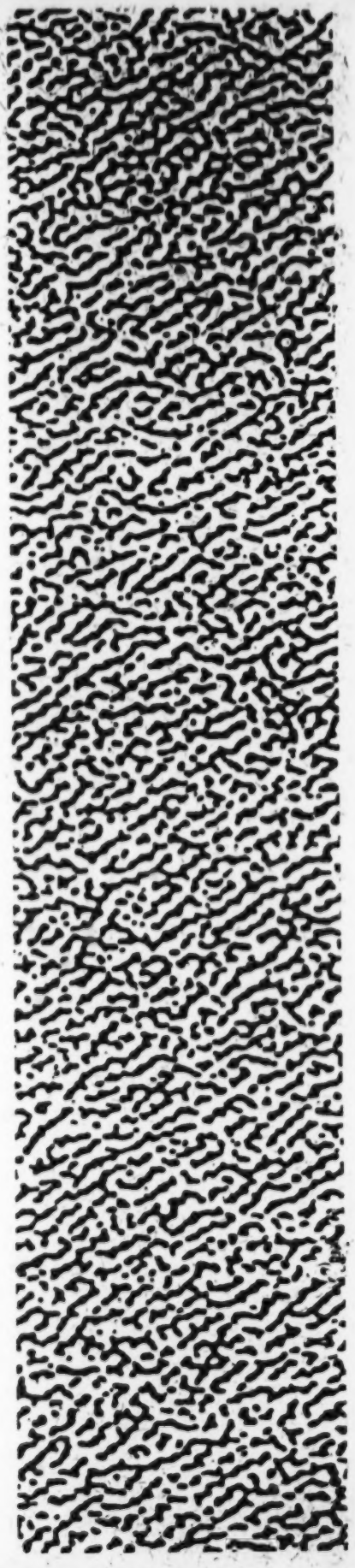

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